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PUBLIC MEETING SESSION  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
DRAFT LOWER SNAKE RIVER JUVENILE SALMON MIGRATION  
FEASIBILITY REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
WITH  
FEDERAL CAUCUS CONSERVATION OF COLUMBIA BASIN FISH  
"ALL-H PAPER"

ASTORIA, OREGON

PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION  
FEBRUARY 15, 2000

Tapes Transcribed by: Michael R. King, CSR

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BOB SHEVE:

-- s-h-e-v-e. Residence is 405 Pleasant Avenue,  
Astoria, Oregon. Phone number is 503-325-5986.

Not being well aware of all of the situations that  
are affecting the Columbia River Basin, I definitely believe  
that the dams are a major contributing factor to the  
detriment of the fish, some nine species as of to date  
supposedly in danger.

I feel that major drawdowns of dams could be one of  
the solutions to restoring fish. The fish that are behind  
these dams on their return -- on their youthful migration to  
the ocean become predatory by other fish and airborne birds.

The fish situation, I think, could be solved a great  
deal by drawing down Bonneville Dam, The Dalles Dam and the  
Snake River dams for a short period while the major portion  
of these migrations of these fish is in process.

Our obligation to our grandchildren and the people  
that are going to come up into this world in the future is  
our responsibility. We're leaving them a very poor legacy in  
regards to wild fish stocks.

My full interest here is to draw down the dams and  
it needs to be done in a very forward way. I think it would  
be the most economic, being that The Dalles Dam was filled up

1 -- the reservoir -- back in the '50s, in less than 12 hours.  
2 I think that the drawdown series could run for about three  
3 months out of the year and the dams could then be put back  
4 into service.

5 Thank you.

6 DON TUSCHOFF:

7 My name is Don Tuschoff. I reside in Seaside,  
8 Oregon, having lived all my life in Clarkston, Washington,  
9 until two years ago when I retired.

10 Since I have listened -- or since hearing about dam  
11 breaching, I have been in favor of it because for all these  
12 years since the dams have gone in, we've watched the fishing  
13 decline from the beginning of the mouth of the Columbia River  
14 through all its tributaries.

15 And everything has been tried. And I am not sure  
16 there aren't more things that could be tried, but still the  
17 numbers go down, down, down when it comes to fish counts.

18 I am in favor of breaching because that is not a  
19 permanent change to the dam in itself. It's just a  
20 breaching. Maybe it will save the fish. If so, the economic  
21 benefits could possibly far outweigh the economic benefits of  
22 the dams themselves. But if it doesn't work -- and this is  
23 what I love -- if it doesn't work, the earthen portion of the  
24 dams can be put back and we'll be where we are today.

25 Now, that's an oversimplification of a very highly

1 complex issue, but that's -- those are my feelings on this  
2 issue.

3 Thank you.

4 JOHN VHAY:

5 My name is John Vhay, and I am speaking for myself  
6 as a citizen of the state of Oregon.

7 My first comments are with respect to the John Day  
8 Reservoir drawdown study and its recommendations. Following  
9 that, I will address some of the studies concerning the  
10 breaching of the Snake dams.

11 Although I agree with the recommendations of the  
12 Phase I Study of the John Day drawdown, I am absolutely  
13 amazed that the Corps would release a summary with such poor  
14 use of significant figures. Someone in your management  
15 should explain to the editor or writer of this document the  
16 use of the numbers.

17 The case in point is on page 21, the projected  
18 numbers of spawning salmon indicated by the biological life  
19 cycle modeling for drawdown and the barge transportation are  
20 reported to four significant figures. At least the  
21 calculations for the spawning habitat in the reservoir are  
22 stated as estimates and reported only to two significant  
23 figures, 5500 and 55,000.

24 Such juvenile work in this summary casts some degree  
25 of doubt as to the professionalism of this entire study.

1           I want to direct my next comments to the NMFS All-H  
2 Studies and the Path Analysis. Everyone acknowledges the  
3 problems confronting us are very complex, but some want  
4 absolute certainty of the outcomes before taking any action.

5           From my part, without oversimplifying things, I  
6 think it is fair to state that since we cannot control ocean  
7 conditions, cannot control basin-wide precipitation and the  
8 occasional drought years, but in spite of these do have  
9 moderately successful runs of bright fall Chinook and  
10 steelhead above McNary on the Columbia, it is obvious the  
11 current practices for the Snake -- the survival of the Snake  
12 runs are totally inadequate.

13           We shouldn't be looking at a few thousand fish on  
14 the Snake. We should be looking at millions of fish coming  
15 back out of that Snake nursery. These runs do not have the  
16 luxury of study time. This is not a classroom experiment.

17           True, biological assessment is necessary, but it  
18 should not be an excuse for doing nothing now. Action must  
19 be taken.

20           Talk about habitat, what is wrong with letting these  
21 Snake River runs have free access to the 1,000 miles of  
22 spawning and rearing waters welcoming them in the main stream  
23 and tributaries of the Grande Ronde, Imnaha, Clearwater and  
24 especially the Salmon? A thousand miles are already in --  
25 above the river mouths are already in protected areas or

1 forests. That's out of the 5200 miles of river in these --  
2 in this Basin.

3 Don't include the 140 miles of current Snake -- on  
4 the current Snake River reservoirs in the calculations until  
5 they're flushed of silt.

6 We can't go blaming people in the past for doing  
7 things. We have to take action and do it now. But are we  
8 too proud and bullheaded to admit that these dams were a  
9 mistake? I hope not.

10 But if we do not breach these structures as soon as  
11 possible and assist those who'll be temporarily affected, we  
12 might as well forget this whole exercise. Just back up,  
13 direct the Bonneville and the Corps to let contracts for  
14 permanent signs stating "The following extinctions were  
15 brought to you by the citizens of the Pacific Northwest  
16 through their elected officials and the bureaucrats due to  
17 inaction and lack of courage in the years 2000 through 2010."

18 Thank you for listening.

19 PETE FERRERO:

20 Pete Ferrero, citizen, Astoria, Oregon.

21 This is really to Colonel William Buhlin and his  
22 associates. Salmon species have been under duress of  
23 extinction when the first of numerous dams was constructed on  
24 the Columbia River and its tributaries. Need one say more?

25 The problem has been researched to the point of

1 exhaustion; regretfully, underfinanced, politicized and  
2 covert corruption and exploited for the benefit of greed for  
3 the few to profit at the expense of endangering the species  
4 to the point of extinction within our lifetime.

5           While we debate the research and economics, the Rome  
6 of the Northwest has been burning. With virtually all  
7 extinct species, the major cause was loss of healthy habitat.

8           I support the restoration of some of the viable  
9 salmon habitat on the Snake River by breaching the four dams  
10 in question. With that, I want to focus on accountability.  
11 For years the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has changed the  
12 natural topography of our sweet earth. Not being a student  
13 of their projects, I have to stand in awe at some of their  
14 success in constructing such monoliths as the Grand Coulee  
15 Dam.

16           What I nor the populace noted was the other side of  
17 their successes, such as the destruction of salmon  
18 populations. I realize that with progress something is  
19 gained and something is lost, but when pertinent species  
20 become at risk of extinction for the benefit of subsidizing  
21 business interests, it is time to change the legacy of the  
22 Corps.

23           Legacy is defined as something gifted by will or  
24 something transmitted or received by an ancestor or  
25 predecessor from the past.

1                   We're not building the Grand Coulee Dam in the year  
2 2000 to ward off and defeat the Nazi and Japanese  
3 dictatorships as our parents and grandparents did. We  
4 hopefully are beyond the ego stage to construct for the sake  
5 of construction.

6                   Since the Corps is the most immediate and the  
7 powerful organization involved with dams and, therefore,  
8 salmon, I am asking Lt. Colonel Buhlin to ask himself and his  
9 superiors as to the question of legacy. Is their legacy one  
10 of continuance of the old guard by propagandizing partial  
11 data to aid their goals and their covert allies? Is their  
12 legacy going to change with regard to unpopular decisions  
13 which floods against the tide of the establishment?

14                   The Corps is not some invisible bureaucracy operated  
15 by nameless humans. It functions by people with such titles  
16 as lieutenant colonel, colonel, general and so and so. What  
17 is the legacy of these people? What will they leave to their  
18 children and possibly even their living parents and  
19 grandparents? Will it be that they altered the course of the  
20 Corps or that they felt it safe to continue down the path  
21 like the sheep before them.

22                   What will your personal legacy be? A great pension  
23 and some dynamic pictures of some Snake River dam and a  
24 picture of salmon which once were? Your legacy will be  
25 linked to the fate of salmon forever. You have been the

1 villain in this saga. You know this.

2 But you the general, colonel and lieutenant colonel  
3 can change this legacy by being honest and lawful, by  
4 properly implementing the Endangered Species Act, by  
5 breaching the dams, by restoring habitat and by restoring  
6 honor to your responsibilities.

7 That's it.

8 ALAN MOORE:

9 My name is Alan Moore. I'm a member of Trout  
10 Unlimited's national staff. This will be brief.

11 We've dedicated over 30 years and well over \$3  
12 billion in so-called techno-fixes trying to correct the  
13 mistakes that we built into the four Lower Snake River dams.

14 Those efforts, quite simply, have not worked. This  
15 is evidenced by entire populations of Snake River salmon and  
16 steelhead on the brink of extinction or already there, and  
17 further evidenced by disappearing tribal, commercial and  
18 sport fisheries from Astoria to Alaska, and inland to Idaho,  
19 as well.

20 What does this tell you? It tells me that our  
21 grandiose and expensive efforts to fix these dams have failed  
22 not because we need to spend more money, take more time, nor  
23 study the issues further. It tells me that it was the dams  
24 themselves that were the mistake, a mistake that can only be  
25 corrected by removing them.

1           We urge you to recognize that fact, do the right  
2 thing for the region, its salmon and its people and make the  
3 tough choices necessary to restore our region's wild salmon  
4 heritage.

5           What is at issue here economically is not whose jobs  
6 are more or less expendable, because that's a distinction  
7 none of us can make. Jobs were affected when we built these  
8 dams and jobs will continue to be affected, no matter which  
9 course we take from here, even if we do nothing.

10           This is now about making the choices we must bring  
11 -- we must make to bring the salmon back, about concentrating  
12 our investments where the human impacts are greatest. The  
13 economies evolve, but extinction does not. And the choice is  
14 clear.

15           We urge the federal government to remove the four  
16 Lower Snake River dams while the salmon still have a chance.

17           Thank you.

18           (TESTIMONY CONCLUDED.)

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